

Alcohol sclerosing therapy is not an effective treatment for interdigital neuroma

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BACKGROUND

Alcohol sclerosing therapy has been reported as a safe and effective means of treating interdigital neuromas, both with or without ultrasound. The use of ultrasound introduces beside the ultrasound device, increased cost, and the need for skilled technicians and may reduce usability, especially in the outpatient clinic. We report a series of patients with interdigital neuroma treated using ethanol sclerosing therapy in a clinic setting without the use of ultrasound.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We retrospectively reviewed charts of 32 consecutive patients who were enrolled to receive a series of sclerosing ethanol injections from June 2009 to April 2010 for the treatment of a painful interdigital neuroma. Plain radiographs and MRI scans were obtained if clinically indicated to assistance with the diagnosis. Duration and quality of symptoms were recorded and current pain levels were evaluated on a visual analog pain scale. Previous treatments, including orthotic use, corticosteroid injection, or prior neuroma resection were reported. A solution of 1 ml consisting of 20% ethanol and 0.25% bupivacain solution was injected without the use of ultrasound into the affected webspace. The mixture was provided by the local pharmacy. Technical success was confirmed by the temporary resolution of pain following local anesthetic infiltration. If still symptomatic, an injection was repeated every 2 weeks, with most patients receiving a series of four injections. Pain was evaluated on a visual analog pain scale at each visit. Treatment success was defined as resolution of pain as expressed by the patient.

RESULTS

Of the 32 patients successful relief of symptoms was only achieved in seven patients, while 25 showed no significant reduction of symptoms and considered or underwent a surgical excision.

CONCLUSION

Alcohol sclerosing therapy administered in the clinic setting without alcohol is not an effective treatment in the nonoperative management of painful interdigital neuromas and has been abandoned in our clinic.

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